



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1929–1968). Civil-rights leader. The son of an influential Atlanta Baptist minister, King was a promising student, influenced by many authors, including Thoreau and Gandhi. Ordained for the ministry, he became active in the civil-rights movement during the Montgomery bus boycott, which ended that city's policy of segregated public transportation. King developed his nonviolent campaign against segregation, becoming a moving force behind the 1964 Civil

Rights Act and gaining international attention. His 1963 March on Washington, which attracted 250,000 people, was highlighted by his famous "I have a dream" speech. The next year he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Continuing his battle, he was about to lead the Poor People's March on Washington when he was assassinated, April 4, 1968. King is acknowledged as one of the great Americans; his birthday is a federal holiday.